

I Want Your Midnights by elandhop

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Adoption, El and Will are best friends, F/M, Family Fluff, Fluff, Found Families, Gen, Mileven, Post S2, Protective Parent Jim "Chief" Hopper, SO MUCH FLUFF, daddy hopper, el and will basically parent trap them, el wants to kiss mike, joyce and hop are so in love with each other its about time they figure it out, joyce wants to be el's mom

Language: English

Characters: Eleven (Stranger Things), Holly Wheeler, Jim "Chief" Hopper, Jonathan Byers, Joyce Byers, Nancy Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Chief - Relationship, Eleven & Holly Wheeler, Eleven & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Eleven & Mike Wheeler, Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Jonathan Byers/Nancy Wheeler, Joyce Byers & Eleven, Joyce Byers & Jim "Chief" Hopper, Joyce Byers & Will Byers, Joyce Byers/Eleven, Joyce Byers/Jim "Chief" Hopper, Will Byers & Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Eleven/Mike Wheeler, Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

El discovers that you're supposed to kiss the person you love at midnight on New Years. Maybe just maybe, super dad Chief Jim Hopper and Joyce Byers need a push toward each other so that Joyce can become a Hopper too...

or,

El and Will are convinced that their parents are in love, and are determined to do something about it. It also doesn't help that Mike's in Minnesota and El wants to give him his New Year's kiss.

I Want Your Midnights

The thought occurs to her for the first time as the clock ticks 12:00 A.M. on January 1st. Will lets out a cheer and rings the small noisemaker Joyce (kind of regrettably now that she thinks about it) picked up from Melvald's. It has "HAPPY NEW YEAR" engraved on it in tiny golden letters. Jonathan blows a small paper party horn, and her hand is squeezed gently by the little girl who has captured not only *her* heart, but the police chief's as well.

"Midnight" El says matter-of-factly. Joyce squeezes back. "Happy New Year, sweetheart". She smiles down at the girl who now has a small smirk on her face. Hopper reaches forward and ruffles El's hair which has gotten a bit longer and curlier since the Snowball dance. Joyce smooths it down.

"Soon enough it'll be long enough for ponytails and braids and all that good stuff. You know how to braid, Hop?" Joyce teases.

"I've done a braid or two... back in my day. Don't worry Ellie, Joycie will take care of you in the hair department" Hopper grins at Joyce, and she grins back sheepishly. Will looks over at El knowingly.

This is going swimmingly El thinks. According to the dictionary Hop's got on their counter, *swimmingly* is an adverb that means smoothly and satisfactorily.

"You look pretty, my sweet girl." Joyce pulls El in for a hug, and El can smell her perfume. She wishes she were as pretty as Joyce.

“Happy New Year, girls” Hopper says softly. *His girls.* At least one of them is.

Not letting go of Joyce, El throws her other arm around Hopper’s waist and pulls him in for a side hug.

If only it could always be like this, Joyce thinks. The five of them in this house, or another one all together, spending the holidays like normal people, like a *family*. In that moment, the thought comes back to her.

She is grateful to Lonnie for her two miracle boys standing next to her in this living room. She wouldn’t trade them for the world. However, in her heart she wishes that by some force of nature, she and Jim could work out too, and live happily ever after. Sure, they aren’t the crazy kids they once were in high school, and although they’re *old* now (according to her kids) she’s still got the silliest school girl crush on him. And--not that’d she’d admit it aloud to Karen Wheeler or any of her other girlfriends, but Jim Hopper looks damn good in uniform. And... it’s because of *his* girl, but fatherhood looks *really* good on him. She’s in *deep* if she keeps thinking this way. It’s too good to be true.

He’s changed a lot since high school, but he still smells the same. It’s cigarettes and coffee and a feeling so unique she doesn’t know how to describe it. It’s not only that she feels so safe when he is around. They’ve been through hell and back, she knows, but they’ve done it together.

The thought comes back once more, as she studies El’s pink dress, curly hair, and beautiful features. It’s a rather silly thought but...

If *only* she could have the honor of being this very special little girl's mother one day. She's grown to care for El, and certainly cares for Jim. They're a two-for-one- deal and she wants the full package. She loves her boys to death, yes, but always imagined having a little girl to go shopping with, gossip, share secrets, do nails and... *girl talk*. She knows she's in deep. The thing is, she decides suddenly, she's not only infatuated with Jim Hopper, but she loves his little girl too.

She's not convinced that El isn't a mind reader when she hears what the little girl has to say next. Eyes that were once so somber light up as a thought forms in her head.

"Midnight kiss" are the next two words that come out of Eleven's mouth. Will stops ringing the noisemaker, and Jonathan's horn halts. Two words, and one very clear meaning. Joyce lets go of El's hand, and stares at Hopper as she blushes.

"What's that, kiddo?" Hopper asks, though he's heard his daughter's statement, clear as a bell. The question is muffled as he runs a hand nervously through the scruff on his chin.

"You heard her" Will laughs. El winks at him. Well, she tries to wink, but it comes out more as a *blink* and Will has to suppress his laughter. One of these days, it's going to work. Ever since the Party watched *The Parent Trap* down in the Wheelers' basement one day, the two of them have been hatching a plan. They may be kids, but they aren't *blind*.

It's not a secret that El admires Joyce. Will's heard so much about Joyce's hair, and makeup and how beautiful not only *she* is but how

wonderful her personality is too. Whenever they color pictures together, El draws various combinations of herself and Will and Jonathan and Joyce and Hopper. Together. As a family. It's not like she'd show Joyce or Hopper her drawings, and frankly, Will thinks *it's about time* and it'd be pretty cool to have the Chief be like well... his father. It's also cool to be in a kind-of-secret drawing club with El.

"You kiss someone you love at Midnight on New Year's" El adds blatantly, bringing Will back to the present. Hopper is flustered, yes but also proud of his girl for working on her *complete* sentences. Joyce has been coming to the cabin after work each Thursday to work with El, so that she can go to school with the boys soon. El thinks she's the best teacher in the world, and can only wish to have handwriting as *pretty* as Joyce's. She's almost got all of her cursive letters down. El has decided that "J" is the most fun letter to write. "E's" are okay, but they're nowhere near as swirly as what she refers to as Joyce's "letter".

"Mhm!" Will nods in agreement, and crosses his arms.

"And who.... Honey.... Who told you about that tradition?" asks Joyce.

"Mike told me" El adds pointedly. "I can't kiss him now though because he's visiting his grandparents."

"In Minnesota!" Will adds as Hopper shakes his head, and puts a hand on his forehead. He may be in his forties, but he's too young for his hair to start falling out over some boy *kissing* his girl. Not that Mike is *some boy*, he's actually pretty fond of the kid.

Hop doesn't know what aspect of that *complete sentence* to worry about first. There's the fact that his little girl implied that she *loves* the Wheeler kid, *and* there's the fact that she wants to kiss him. He taps his fingers on his temple and takes a sip of the beer he's been nursing.

"Maybe tomorrow" El shrugs. "He's coming back tomorrow".

Now, super-dad Chief Jim Hopper spits out his beer and well...he's done one thing tonight to make his Joycie laugh.

"You're my little girl. No kissing boys." Hop says this firmly, and then reaches down to give El a kiss on the cheek.

"There's a New Year's kiss for you. You're my daughter, and I love you." El hugs him again, and he picks her up and swings her around in a circle. She giggles, and Joyce instinctively pulls her boys in for a hug.

"I love you too, Daddy," El says.

Hop smiles softly, because although he's not entirely religious, he thinks that if there's a God above, somehow He made it so that they'd wind up together-him and his Ellie. He also hopes that ending up with Joyce is in the cards....like *that's* going to happen.

They probably both know it at this rate. Joyce has got her boys and her job and hell Bob *just died* and she's still way out of his league.

“C’mere El” Joyce pulls El in, and kisses the top of her head. “There’s another New Year’s kiss for you”. Hopper’s beaming at the sheer cuteness and Jonathan grabs his video camera from the coffee table.

“New Year’s Day, and here we are in the living room” he narrates.

El throws her arms around Hopper’s middle, and leans into him. Suddenly, Joyce is in on the hug too, and so is Will. Behind the camera, Jonathan laughs.

“I feel left out!” he says jokingly, but keeps recording. Will glances and El, and the two kids break away from the hug. It takes a moment as the two adults try to let go of each other... and...be responsible grown ups but now Joyce’s head is under Hop’s chin and *what the hell does he have to lose except maybe...everything...* he gives Joyce a kiss on the forehead as she snuggles into his chest... and... well...

it’s perfect.

His Joycie is grinning up at him and he tries to speak but again, he’s flustered hoping he hasn’t made a big mistake.

“Joycie, I’m sorry I don’t know what got into-”

She shuts him up with a proper kiss this time, on the lips and the kids are cheering and maybe it’s a little after midnight kiss, but she’s been

waiting to do this for a very long time.

Joyce and Hopper suddenly *remember* the kids are there, but they're cheering so they can't *hate* the idea and Hop pulls her in for another kiss as Will and El high five. Jonathan laughs behind the camera.

"You know I've got this all on tape, right?"

"Oh *Hop* "

"Yeah, Joycie?"

"Just hold me"

And he does. Will and El (although they're excited) scuttle off to bed soon, and probably aren't sleeping because for them, this is more exciting than the anticipation of Christmas. If she's being perfectly honest, this was probably her biggest Christmas wish, to *maybe* just *maybe* convince her daddy that Joyce and Will and Jonathan should be a part of their family.

This is a good start, she decides.

It's the morning after.

Not like *that*.

Jim Hopper can't believe that his tiny Joycie is cuddled up in his arms, her lips peppering sloppy kisses on his neck and bare chest. The light coming in from the windows makes him pull the blanket up further around them, and he swears, Joyce's smile and the warmth between them could give the sun competition.

Okay, maybe it was a little like *that* .

Because they *did* spend the night tangled together on the couch, making out like the teenagers they once were.

"What time is it?" Joyce asks, peering up at him.

He glances at the clock that haphazardly sits on top of the VHS player.

"Ten? Eleven?"

Oh Jesus.

He suddenly remembers where he is with the unintentional mention

of his daughter's name.

"Hey Joycie" he says softly. "I-I really like you. I meant it when I kissed you. I know you could probably do better and you know, but me and the kid, we really like you a lot".

Joyce suddenly slaps his arm, and it kind of hurts. She's tiny but mighty.

"Jim Hopper, if you think I sleep on my couch with and kiss just *anyone* you're wrong. I'm actually a little offended." Joyce smirks, and pinches his cheek.

It is what it is. He hopes it's a good enough start.

"I'd like to take you out, Joyce. I'd like to take you out on a real, actual date."

"Oh, so we won't just be making out under the bleachers at the high school?" she smiles and kisses the cheek she's just pinched. His face goes red.

"I mean we *could* , but I was thinking more of burgers and-"

Will and El tiptoe into the living room, and he's warned her to cover her eyes, though she isn't sure what she's not supposed to be seeing.

“PUT ON YOUR CLOTHES!” Will yells, and El laughs. Hopper’s face is like a tomato as he reaches for his shirt which now lays on the floor. He pulls it over his head haphazardly.

El opens her eyes.

“Oh. Daddy. What time are the Wheelers getting home?” Will observes that the statement comes off as very nonchalant, as if she hasn’t noticed Joyce, or if she’s just used to seeing his mother and her father cuddled up.

Joyce nervously runs her hands through her hair, and smiles as Hopper answers.

He *knows* he’s going to regret what he’s about to say.

“Think they need a ride home from the airport?”

“I’m sure Jonathan wants to see Nancy and I know you two miss Mike” Joyce grins as El’s eyes go wide as she comprehends what Joyce and her father must be implying.

“See Mike today?” she asks. Hopper nods.

So that’s how they end up at the airport on New Year's Day, waiting

by the terminal for the Wheelers. Tucked under her chair, El has a big sign that reads “WELCOME HOME WHEELERS” that she and Will made together this morning.

It'll be a surprise, Will explains to El. El rests her head on Joyce's shoulder as they wait, and closes her eyes. Joyce grins up at her Hop as his daughter nods off.

“Told you we like you. It isn't just me who can't resist your charms, Horowitz”.

Joyce laughs, and pushes one of El's curls behind her ears.

“She's beautiful.”

“Horowitz?” El asks half asleep.

“That was my name, sweetheart, before I married Will and Jonathan's dad.”

“Oh” is all El says.

“I could change it back” Joyce adds. “But...I guess I'm kind of used to being Joyce Byers”.

Hop excuses himself to go to the bathroom.

“Can I tell you a secret, Joyce?” El asks once he’s out of earshot.

“Of course” Joyce squeezes El’s hand.

“I’m a Hopper now.”

“I heard” Joyce laughs a little and El starts to speak again.

“If you marry my dad, you could be Joyce Hopper.” El is immensely proud of her last name, and wants Joyce to be a Hopper too.

“Maybe someday, sweetie. Let’s just get through the first date first”

“Wasn’t the first *date* last night?” Will pipes up and Joyce blushes.

“Will, honey, stop it.” Joyce rolls her eyes, but then pulls her youngest in for a hug.

Hopper comes back from the bathroom a few minutes later and suddenly El sees him. A mop of messy black hair, and freckles, yes it’s him. He’s pulling a suitcase with one hand, and holding Holly’s tiny hand with the other. El jumps up and practically runs across the terminal. The boys stand up and the adults soon follow. Will

remembers the sign, and grabs it from under the seat.

“Mike!” “Mike!”. El’s practically jumping up and down as confusion washes over Mike’s face. He hears her voice before he sees her, and suddenly, she’s next to him.

“Ellie!!” Holly gets first dibs, and lets go of Mike’s hand to practically jump on El. El hugs Holly tightly, and kisses the top of her head.

“Hi Holly. Was Santa good to you?”

Holly nods and sucks her thumb, not letting go of El with her other hand.

“El, you’re here. How?” Mike is breathless, and stares at Eleven’s face with wonder.

“Hop. And Joyce!” she says gleefully. “We missed you so much.” She motions to Will who is holding up the sign proudly.

Jonathan has caught up to the younger kids, and is hugging Nancy.

“I missed you too” Mike pulls El in for a hug, and it’s only been a week but she’s *missed* him. El gently removes her hand from Holly’s, and wraps both arms around Mike’s waist. Before he can let go, she reaches up, touches his right cheek with her fingers, and presses her lips there. It’s quick and soft. Even Hopper can’t disapprove as he

watches in the background.

“I wonder who will get married first, us or them?” Hopper jokes quietly as Joyce pokes him in the side, but then slinks her arm around his waist.

Will will later swear that he doesn't know whose face was redder in that moment, Hopper's or Mike's.

“Happy New Year, Mike” El says softly.

“Happy New Year El” Mike grins, and high fives Will. “It's good to be home”.

Thank you for reading! Here is the fan video that goes alongside this fic:

Author's Note:

Thank you for reading. This fic was a labor of love, and I truly hope that I captured the characters all right. I hope you enjoyed reading, and I would love to know what you think.